



Website usability and purchase intention among generation z users in fashion e-commerce: the mediating role of user satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between website usability and purchase intention within the population of Generation Z consumers engaged with fashion e-commerce platforms, with user satisfaction as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey of 198 Generation Z users with experience in fashion e-commerce. Website usability was measured using the WEBUSE framework, and data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Findings demonstrate that navigation and links, as well as user interface design, have significant positive effects on both user satisfaction and purchase intention. In contrast, content, organization and readability, and performance and effectiveness do not have significant effects. Furthermore, user satisfaction does not significantly influence purchase intention, indicating that Generation Z users may place greater emphasis on specific usability features than overall satisfaction in making purchase decisions. Mediation analysis reveals that user satisfaction has a limited mediating role. These findings highlight the importance of optimizing navigation and interface design to enhance user experience and increase purchase intention. This study contributes to the literature by showing that purchase intention among Generation Z is more strongly influenced by specific usability dimensions than overall satisfaction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of e-commerce has significantly reshaped how consumers interact with brands, particularly in the fashion industry where digital platforms dominate product search and purchasing activities. In this context, website usability and user experience have become critical factors influencing user evaluation and purchase behavior. Consumers increasingly assess e-commerce platforms based on experiential aspects rather than solely on product variety or pricing (Bleier et al., 2019; Guo et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024; Vasić et al., 2019). As competition intensifies, usability plays a

central role in shaping users' perceptions and purchase intentions. Generation Z represents a key segment in the growth of fashion e-commerce. As digital natives, they have high expectations regarding ease of use, visual design, system responsiveness, and navigation clarity (Priporas et al., 2017). This group tends to be less tolerant of poor digital experiences and is more likely to abandon platforms that fail to meet their expectations (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Recent studies also highlight that AI-driven personalization and digital experience significantly influence Generation Z's purchasing decisions (Ruiz-Viñals et al., 2024; Xie, 2026). The experience-oriented behavior of Generation Z implies that e-commerce website development strategies should no longer focus only on transactional functions, but also on creating seamless, visually engaging, responsive, and personalized digital experiences. For fashion e-commerce platforms, this means website development should prioritize intuitive navigation, a consistent interface design, fast system response times, and interactive features that reduce user effort and encourage continued engagement. Therefore, understanding how website usability influences their purchasing behavior is essential both academically and practically.

Prior empirical work has established that website usability exerts a positive influence on user satisfaction in various digital contexts. Elements such as navigation, interface design, and system performance contribute to improving user experience (Flavián et al., 2019; Shi & Yuan, 2019). Some studies find a significant direct effect (Jauhari et al., 2019), while others indicate that the relationship is indirect and mediated by evaluative factors such as user satisfaction, trust, or perceived value (Aljabari et al., 2023; Guo et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024). These inconsistent findings indicate several empirical gaps. First, previous research has not reached a clear conclusion on whether website usability directly influences purchase intention or whether the relationship occurs through mediating variables. Second, many studies still examine usability as a general construct, which limits understanding of how specific usability dimensions influence purchase intention. Third, limited empirical attention has been given to Generation Z users in fashion e-commerce, even though this segment is highly sensitive to visual, interactive, and experience-based website features. From a consumer behavior perspective, user satisfaction is considered an evaluative response to interaction experiences and a key determinant of behavioral intentions, including purchase intention (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schiffman & Wisenbli, 2014). In addition, recent research emphasizes that perceived attributes of digital technologies, such as personalization and interactivity, further shape consumer responses and purchase decisions (Arachchi & Samarasinghe, 2025). Therefore, incorporating user satisfaction as a mediating variable provides a more comprehensive explanation of how usability influences purchasing decisions, especially among experience-oriented users such as Generation Z.

Although research on e-commerce usability has advanced, several important gaps remain. First, existing studies predominantly examine usability in general e-commerce contexts, with limited attention to fashion e-commerce, which is inherently more experience-oriented and visually driven. Second, website usability in prior studies is frequently operationalized as a unidimensional construct, overlooking its constituent dimensions—namely content, organization and readability, navigation and links, user interface design, and performance and effectiveness—which are more rigorously captured through an integrated measurement framework such as WEBUSE. Third, despite user satisfaction being widely recognized as a significant outcome of usability, its mediating function in the pathway between specific usability dimensions and purchase intention has received insufficient empirical attention, particularly among Generation Z users. The majority of existing studies either focus on direct effects or incorporate alternative mediators such as trust or perceived value, leaving the satisfaction-mediated pathway inadequately addressed (Bhattacharjee, 2001; DeLone & McLean, 2003; Guo et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024). Methodologically, many prior studies rely on regression-based approaches, which are limited in capturing complex relationships and indirect effects

among latent constructs. In contrast, structural equation modeling provides a more robust analytical framework for simultaneously testing measurement and structural models, as well as mediation effects (Hair et al., 2022; Xie, 2026). Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze the effect of website usability on purchase intention among Generation Z users in fashion e-commerce, by simultaneously examining the multidimensional structure of usability using the WEBUSE framework and the mediating role of user satisfaction. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical implications for UI/UX design in fashion e-commerce by helping platform developers identify which usability dimensions should be prioritized. Rather than improving website features in a general way, fashion e-commerce platforms can focus on navigation clarity, interface consistency, visual attractiveness, and interaction convenience to enhance user experience and encourage purchase intention. This research is expected to extend the literature on website usability and digital consumer behavior, especially from the Generation Z perspective, while also providing practical insights for designing user-centered fashion e-commerce platforms.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Website Usability in the E-Commerce Context

Website usability encompasses the degree to which a website empowers users to access information, navigate features, and complete tasks effectively, efficiently, and comfortably. In e-commerce, usability is a crucial element because the website functions as the main interaction channel between consumers and sellers. A usable website helps users reduce search effort, understand transaction processes, and complete purchases with fewer obstacles (Nielsen, 2012). In fashion e-commerce, usability is especially important because users do not only evaluate products and prices, but also the quality of their digital experience. Clear navigation, attractive interface design, and smooth interaction can improve users' perception of the platform and encourage further engagement. Previous studies also show that effective online customer experience is shaped by web page design elements that influence users' responses and purchase behavior (Vasić et al., 2019; Bleier et al., 2019).

2.2 Measurement of Website Usability Using WEBUSE

Website usability can be measured using several instruments, among which the Website Usability Evaluation Tool (WEBUSE) stands as a prominent option. WEBUSE is a perception-based measurement instrument developed to assess website usability from the standpoint of the end user, encompassing four core dimensions: content, organization, and readability; navigation and links; user interface design; and performance and effectiveness (Chiew & Salim, 2003). The content, organization, and readability dimension pertains to the degree of clarity and structural coherence of information as presented on the website. Navigation and links describe how easily users move between pages and find the required features. User interface design reflects the visual appearance, layout consistency, and interaction comfort, while performance and effectiveness refer to access speed, system reliability, and the ability of the website to support user goals. These four dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for assessing usability in e-commerce websites (Andiputra & Tanamal, 2020; Sodik et al., 2023).

2.3 User Satisfaction as an Evaluation of User Experience

User satisfaction represents users' overall evaluation after interacting with a digital system. It is formed when users compare their expectations with the perceived performance of the system. In information systems and e-commerce, satisfaction reflects cognitive and affective responses toward functional accessibility, interactional comfort,

perceived utility, and the extent to which the system fulfills user interaction needs (Bhattacharjee, 2001; DeLone & McLean, 2003; Guo et al., 2023). In the online shopping environment, satisfaction is intrinsically linked to the quality of the overall user experience. Intuitive navigation, clear interface design, reliable system performance, and interactive digital features can strengthen users' positive evaluation of a platform. Recent studies also show that technology-enhanced experiences, including virtual and interactive features, can add value to the customer journey and shape user responses toward digital platforms (Flavián et al., 2019; Xie, 2026). For Generation Z users, satisfaction becomes particularly important because this group is highly familiar with digital platforms and expects fast, simple, and visually appealing interactions. Therefore, user satisfaction can serve as a mechanism that explains how website usability influences subsequent behavioral intentions, including purchase intention.

2.4 Purchase Intention in the Digital Environment

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood that consumers will buy products or services in the future based on their previous evaluations, perceptions, and experiences. In e-commerce, purchase intention is commonly used as an indicator of platform effectiveness because it reflects users' tendency to move from browsing to actual buying behavior (Ghosh, 2024; Guo et al., 2023). Emerging empirical literature suggests that online purchase intention is determined by multiple factors including website quality, perceived ease of use, trust, personalization, and the overall digital experience. In AI-supported e-commerce, personalized recommendations and shopping assistants can shape user motivation, satisfaction, and repurchase intention by improving the interaction between consumers and digital platforms (Lopes et al., 2024; Xie, 2026).

With respect to Generation Z, purchase intention is not solely determined by functional factors such as price and product availability, but also by personalized and interactive digital experiences. Algorithmic personalization has been demonstrated to shape Generation Z's purchase intention by enhancing perceptions of creativity and authenticity, while AI-powered recommendation systems can encourage buying intention through perceived usefulness and trust (Haq et al., 2026; Hu et al., 2025).

2.5 Characteristics of Generation Z in E-Commerce

Generation Z is a consumer group that grew up with internet technology and digital platforms. This generation tends to be technologically literate, visually oriented, and highly responsive to digital interaction quality. In e-commerce, Generation Z expects fast access, simple navigation, attractive design, and relevant product information (Priporas et al., 2017). In fashion e-commerce, these characteristics are highly relevant because fashion products rely strongly on visual presentation and experience-based evaluation. Generation Z users are more likely to evaluate a platform not only as a place to purchase products, but also as a digital space that represents brand image, convenience, and interaction quality. Therefore, usability and satisfaction are important factors in understanding their purchase intention (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Haq et al., 2026).

2.6 The Relationship between Website Usability, User Satisfaction, and Purchase Intention

Website usability constitutes a fundamental determinant that shapes user experience in e-commerce. A website that is easy to navigate, visually consistent, and responsive can reduce user effort and increase comfort during online shopping. This positive experience may increase user satisfaction and encourage purchase intention (Shi & Yuan, 2019; Vasić et al., 2019). However, previous research concerning the direct effect of usability on purchase intention remains empirically inconclusive. Several studies affirm that website quality and usability directly predict purchase intention, while others

suggest that the relationship works through evaluative factors such as satisfaction, trust, or perceived value (Guo et al., 2023; Jauhari et al., 2019). This indicates that users' evaluation of their experience may explain how usability is translated into purchase decisions. Accordingly, this study positions user satisfaction as a mediating variable between website usability and purchase intention. This mediation perspective is relevant because users may not immediately form purchase intention from usability alone, but through their overall evaluation of the interaction experience.

2.7 Hypothesis Development

a. Website Usability and User Satisfaction

Website usability denotes the degree to which a website is capable of being used with ease, efficiently, and comfortably by its intended users in achieving their goals. In the context of e-commerce, usability is a fundamental factor, as user interaction experiences are highly influenced by content clarity, ease of navigation, interface design, and system performance. A website with a high level of usability enables users to interact without obstacles, thereby creating a positive experience and enhancing users' evaluation of the website (Nielsen, 2012; Shi & Yuan, 2019). The WEBUSE instrument classifies website usability into four main dimensions: content, organization, and readability; navigation and links; user interface design; and performance and effectiveness. These dimensions represent aspects of user experience that are directly perceived during interaction with the website. Previous studies indicate that clear content quality, intuitive navigation, attractive interface design, and strong system performance contribute positively to user satisfaction (Shi & Yuan, 2019; Vasić et al., 2019). In light of the foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses are put forward: H1: Content, organization, and readability positively affects user satisfaction. H2: Navigation and links positively affects user satisfaction. H3: User interface design positively affects user satisfaction. H4: Performance and effectiveness positively affects user satisfaction.

b. Website Usability and Purchase Intention

In addition to influencing user satisfaction, website usability also has the potential to directly affect purchase intention. A user-friendly website can reduce users' cognitive load, increase their confidence in conducting transactions, and accelerate decision-making processes. In the context of e-commerce, ease of use often becomes an initial consideration before users decide to proceed with a purchase (Jauhari et al., 2019). Thus, each usability dimension is expected not only to influence purchase intention through satisfaction but also to have a direct effect on users' purchase intention. Grounded in this reasoning, the following hypotheses are advanced: H5: Content, organization, and readability positively affects purchase intention. H6: Navigation and links positively affects purchase intention. H7: User interface design positively affects purchase intention. H8: Performance and effectiveness positively affects purchase intention.

c. User Satisfaction and Purchase Intention

User satisfaction represents the overall evaluation of users after interacting with a website. In consumer behavior literature, satisfaction is considered an important determinant of subsequent behavioral intentions, including purchase intention. Users who are satisfied tend to develop positive perceptions of the website, have greater trust in the system, and are more likely to engage in transactions (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schiffman & Wisenbli, 2014). In the context of fashion e-commerce, particularly among Generation Z users who are highly experience-oriented, user satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intention. Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed: H9: User satisfaction positively affects purchase intention.

d. The Mediating Role of User Satisfaction

Although website usability can directly influence purchase intention, this effect is often strengthened through users' evaluation of their experience. User satisfaction acts as a psychological mechanism that bridges users' perceptions of website usability and their purchase intention. By positioning user satisfaction as a mediating variable, the relationship between website usability and purchase intention can be explained more comprehensively, particularly among Generation Z users who are sensitive to digital experience quality (Guo et al., 2023). Based on this explanation, the ensuing mediation hypotheses are formulated: H10: User satisfaction serves as a mediator of the impact of content, organization, and readability on purchase intention. H11: User satisfaction mediates the effect of navigation and links on purchase intention. H12: User satisfaction mediates the effect of user interface design on purchase intention. H13: User satisfaction mediates the effect of performance and effectiveness on purchase intention.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative approach within an explanatory research design, aimed at examining the causal relationships among latent variables in the proposed conceptual model. Specifically, this study seeks to investigate the effect of website usability on purchase intention, both directly and indirectly through user satisfaction as a mediating variable, in the context of Generation Z users engaging with fashion e-commerce platforms. The quantitative approach was deemed appropriate given that the study involves hypothesis testing derived from established theoretical frameworks and prior empirical studies, utilizing numerical data obtained through a structured survey instrument.

The target population of this study consists of Generation Z individuals with firsthand experience using fashion e-commerce websites. Purposive sampling was employed, with respondents required to meet two eligibility criteria: (1) belonging to the Generation Z cohort, and (2) having prior experience accessing fashion e-commerce websites for information-seeking or transactional purposes. A total of 198 valid respondents were recruited, a sample size considered sufficient to meet the requirements of PLS-SEM as an analytical technique. The use of 198 respondents also supports the stability of the PLS-SEM model because the sample size exceeds the minimum requirement commonly suggested for models involving multiple latent constructs and mediating relationships. In this study, the largest number of structural paths directed at an endogenous construct is five, meaning that the sample size is well above the minimum threshold based on the ten-times rule. Therefore, the number of respondents provides a more adequate basis for estimating path coefficients, reducing sampling error, and producing more stable bootstrapping results. Nevertheless, model stability is not determined by sample size alone, but is also evaluated through indicator reliability, convergent validity, composite reliability, coefficient of determination, effect size, and bootstrapping results. This analytical technique was selected on the grounds that it is particularly suited for explanatory and predictive research objectives, capable of handling multiple latent constructs with both direct and indirect (mediating) path relationships, and does not impose restrictive assumptions regarding sample size or multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2022).

Data were collected using an online self-administered questionnaire comprising closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale, anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). The online mode of data collection was considered appropriate and efficient for accessing Generation Z respondents, who are characterized by high levels of digital literacy and routine engagement with online platforms. This study operationalizes three primary constructs: website usability, user satisfaction, and purchase intention. Website usability was measured using the WEBUSE instrument

(*Website Usability Evaluation Tool*), a standardized scale designed to assess usability based on subjective user perceptions (Chiew & Salim, 2003). This instrument encompasses four core dimensions: content, organization, and readability; navigation and links; user interface design; and performance and effectiveness.

User satisfaction was measured based on respondents' perceptions of their level of satisfaction after interacting with fashion e-commerce websites, reflecting the overall evaluation of user experience. Meanwhile, purchase intention was measured based on respondents' tendency to make purchases through fashion e-commerce websites. All indicators in this study were treated as reflective indicators, as they are considered manifestations of the underlying latent constructs (Hair et al., 2022). Data analysis was conducted through PLS-SEM utilizing SmartPLS software. The analytical procedure encompasses two sequential stages: assessment of the measurement model (outer model) and assessment of the structural model (inner model). The measurement model was evaluated by examining convergent validity and construct reliability through factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability.

The structural model was assessed through the examination of path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2), and effect size (f^2) to evaluate the magnitude and predictive capacity of the model. Hypothesis testing was conducted employing the bootstrapping procedure to derive t-statistics and p-values as the basis for inferential judgment. Furthermore, mediation analysis was carried out to determine the indirect effect of website usability on purchase intention through user satisfaction, with the aim of establishing whether the observed mediation constitutes a full or partial effect, in accordance with PLS-SEM analytical guidelines (Hair et al., 2022).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation and Model Fit

The measurement model evaluation results presented in Table 1 demonstrate that all constructs included in this study satisfy the established criteria for both validity and reliability. All indicators yielded factor loadings exceeding the prescribed minimum threshold, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values confirm adequate levels of convergent validity. Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability coefficients for each construct surpass the recommended cut-off values, providing evidence that the measurement instruments are both internally consistent and reliable.

Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Construct	Indicator s	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Remarks
Content, Organization & Readability (COR)	6	>0,70	> 0,50	> 0,70	> 0,70	Valid & Reliable
Navigation & Links (NL)	6	> 0,70	> 0,50	> 0,70	> 0,70	Valid & Reliable
User Interface Design (UID)	6	> 0,70	> 0,50	> 0,70	> 0,70	Valid & Reliable
Performance & Effectiveness (PE)	6	> 0,70	> 0,50	> 0,70	> 0,70	Valid & Reliable
User Satisfaction (US)	5	> 0,70	> 0,50	> 0,70	> 0,70	Valid & Reliable
Purchase Intention (PI)	5	> 0,70	> 0,50	> 0,70	> 0,70	Valid & Reliable

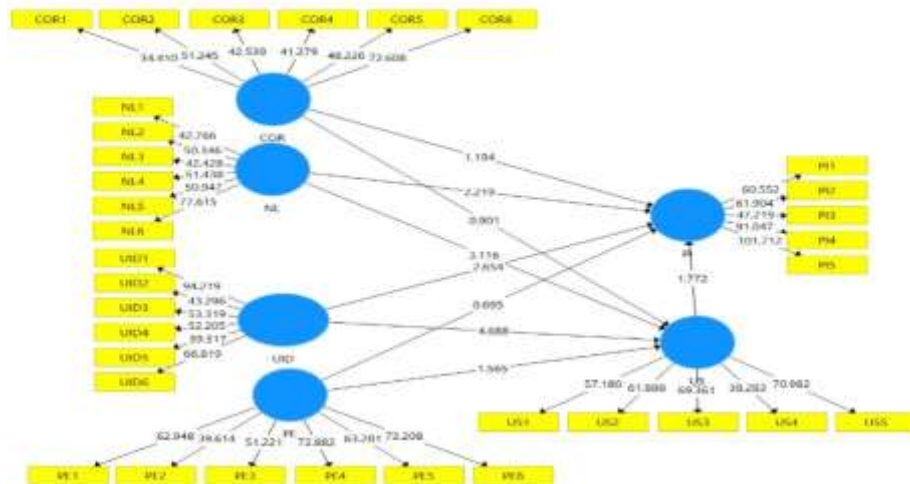


Figure 1. Structural Model of Website Usability, User Satisfaction, and Purchase Intention

Figure 1 depicts the structural model estimated through PLS-SEM. The model delineates the interconnections among the four constituent dimensions of website usability—content, organization and readability (COR), navigation and links (NL), user interface design (UID), and performance and effectiveness (PE)—and two outcome constructs, namely user satisfaction (US) and purchase intention (PI). Based on the bootstrapping estimates presented in the model, user interface design (UID) exhibits the strongest association with user satisfaction, followed by navigation and links (NL), whereas content, organization and readability (COR) and performance and effectiveness (PE) demonstrate comparatively weaker relationships. With respect to purchase intention, user interface design (UID) similarly exerts a relatively pronounced influence, while navigation and links (NL) reflect a moderate effect. By contrast, content, organization and readability (COR) and performance and effectiveness (PE) yield notably weaker associations with purchase intention. Moreover, the relationship between user satisfaction and purchase intention appears comparatively modest relative to the direct effects of certain usability dimensions, suggesting that Generation Z users may be more responsive to specific usability attributes than to overall satisfaction when forming behavioral intentions toward purchasing. Collectively, the model underscores that usability dimensions do not contribute uniformly to user experience and behavioral outcomes, with interface design and navigational quality emerging as the more consequential determinants in the context of fashion e-commerce engagement.

Following the structural model presented in Figure 1, the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the User Satisfaction construct is 0.948, indicating that 94.8% of the variance in user satisfaction can be explained by the dimensions of website usability. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for Purchase Intention is 0.904. According to Hair et al. (2022), these values indicate substantial explanatory power of the model. The high R^2 values suggest that the selected constructs adequately capture the key determinants of user experience and behavioral intention in the context of fashion e-commerce among Generation Z users. The results of the structural model (inner model) evaluation are presented in Table 2.

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Interpretation
User Satisfaction	0,948	Very Strong
Purchase Intention	0,904	Very Strong

The direct effects analysis reveals that not all dimensions of website usability exert a statistically significant influence on user satisfaction and purchase intention among Generation Z users. In particular, navigation and links ($\beta = 0.339$, $p = 0.027$) and user interface design ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrate a positive and significant effect on user satisfaction, indicating that intuitive navigational structure and aesthetically engaging interface design constitute primary determinants of user experience quality. Conversely, content, organization, and readability ($\beta = 0.071$, $p = 0.368$) as well as performance and effectiveness ($\beta = 0.189$, $p = 0.118$) fail to reach statistical significance in predicting user satisfaction, implying that these dimensions may be regarded by users as baseline expectations rather than as attributes capable of meaningfully elevating satisfaction levels.

With regard to purchase intention, navigation and links ($\beta = 0.328$, $p = 0.027$) and user interface design ($\beta = 0.545$, $p = 0.008$) are confirmed to exert significant positive effects, underscoring their pivotal role in stimulating users' behavioral intention to transact. In contrast, content, organization, and readability ($\beta = -0.098$, $p = 0.233$) and performance and effectiveness ($\beta = -0.109$, $p = 0.487$) yield no significant effects on purchase intention. Notably, user satisfaction also fails to demonstrate a statistically significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.289$, $p = 0.077$), suggesting that Generation Z users may place greater weight on discrete usability attributes rather than on aggregated satisfaction when formulating their purchasing intentions. The outcomes of hypothesis testing are comprehensively presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effects)

Code	Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-statistics	p-value	Decision
H1	The effect of COR on US	Content, Organization & Readability \rightarrow User Satisfaction	0,071	0,901	0,368	Rejected
H2	The effect of NL on US	Navigation & Links \rightarrow User Satisfaction	0,339	2,219	0,027	Accepted
H3	The effect of UID on US	User Interface Design \rightarrow User Satisfaction	0,389	4,688	< 0,001	Accepted
H4	The effect of PE on US	Performance & Effectiveness \rightarrow User Satisfaction	0,189	1,565	0,118	Rejected
H5	The effect of COR on PI	Content, Organization & Readability \rightarrow Purchase Intention	-0,098	1,194	0,233	Rejected
H6	The effect of NL on PI	Navigation & Links \rightarrow Purchase Intention	0,328	2,219	0,027	Accepted
H7	The effect of UID on PI	User Interface Design \rightarrow Purchase Intention	0,545	2,654	0,008	Accepted
H8	The effect of PE on PI	Performance & Effectiveness \rightarrow Purchase Intention	-0,109	0,695	0,487	Rejected
H9	The effect of US on PI	User Satisfaction \rightarrow Purchase Intention	0,289	1,772	0,077	Rejected

The mediation analysis results indicate that user satisfaction does not consistently mediate the relationship between website usability dimensions and purchase intention. Specifically, the indirect effect of content, organization, and readability on purchase intention through user satisfaction is not significant ($\beta = 0.020$), indicating the absence of a mediating role. Similarly, performance and effectiveness also do not exhibit a significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.055$), suggesting that user satisfaction does not function as a mediator in this relationship. The non-significant mediation of content and performance implies that these two usability dimensions do not shape purchase intention through users' satisfaction evaluation. In practical terms, Generation Z users may perceive clear content, readable information, fast access, and basic system performance as minimum requirements that must already be present in an e-commerce website.

Therefore, improving content structure or technical performance alone may not be sufficient to increase purchase intention unless these improvements are accompanied by more experience-oriented features, such as intuitive navigation and engaging interface design.

In contrast, user satisfaction is revealed to serve as a partial mediator bridging the relationship between navigation and links ($\beta = 0.098$) and user interface design ($\beta = 0.112$) on purchase intention. The significant indirect effects indicate that these usability dimensions influence purchase intention not only directly but also indirectly through enhancing user satisfaction. This suggests that intuitive navigation and effective interface design contribute to improving user experience, which in turn supports the formation of purchase intention within the context of Generation Z users on fashion e-commerce platforms. The mediation testing outcomes are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Mediation Testing (User Satisfaction)

Code	Hypothesis	Mediation Path	Indirect Effect Coefficient (β)	Significance	Type of Mediation
H10	Mediation of User Satisfaction on COR \rightarrow PI	COR \rightarrow US \rightarrow PI	0,020	Insignificant	No Mediation
H11	Mediation of User Satisfaction on NL \rightarrow PI	NL \rightarrow US \rightarrow PI	0,098	Significant	Partial Mediation
H12	Mediation of User Satisfaction on UID \rightarrow PI	UID \rightarrow US \rightarrow PI	0,112	Significant	Partial Mediation
H13	Mediation of User Satisfaction on PE \rightarrow PI	PE \rightarrow US \rightarrow PI	0,055	Insignificant	No Mediation

4.2 The Influence of Website Usability on User Satisfaction

The path analysis results demonstrate that website usability dimensions do not uniformly exert a significant effect on user satisfaction. The Navigation and Links dimension yields a positive and statistically significant effect on user satisfaction, with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0,339$, t -statistics = 2,219, and p -value = 0,027. These results indicate that ease of navigation and clarity of links play an important role in shaping user satisfaction. For Generation Z users, the ability to quickly and intuitively locate information and navigate between pages is a key factor in evaluating website experience. The User Interface Design dimension also shows a positive and significant effect on user satisfaction, with $\beta = 0,389$, t -statistics = 4,688 and p -value < 0,001. This result confirms that an attractive, consistent, and user-friendly interface plays a crucial role in shaping users' experience evaluation. In the context of fashion e-commerce, this finding is particularly relevant, given that fashion products heavily rely on visual presentation and interaction comfort.

In contrast, the Content, Organization, and Readability dimension does not have a significant effect on user satisfaction ($\beta = 0,071$; $t = 0,901$; $p = 0,368$). In contrast, the Performance and Effectiveness dimension does not have a statistically significant effect on user satisfaction ($\beta = 0.189$, $t = 1.565$, $p = 0.118$). This finding indicates that, although system performance contributes positively, it is not a determining factor in enhancing user satisfaction. For Generation Z users, performance and effectiveness are likely perceived as basic requirements that do not substantially influence their overall evaluation of the website experience. These findings suggest that, for Generation Z users, content quality and system performance are perceived as baseline expectations rather than differentiating factors. As long as the website functions properly and provides sufficient information, neither dimension reaches statistical significance in predicting user satisfaction.

These findings are partly consistent with previous e-commerce usability studies, which emphasize that navigation, interface design, and system quality are important factors in shaping user experience and satisfaction (Shi & Yuan, 2019; Vasić et al., 2019). However, this study differs from prior research that treats usability as a general website quality factor, because the results show that not all usability dimensions have equal influence. In the context of Generation Z and fashion e-commerce, visual and interaction-related dimensions appear to be more influential than content-related or technical dimensions. This suggests that usability effects may vary depending on user characteristics, product category, and the experiential nature of the platform.

4.3 The Influence of User Satisfaction on Purchase Intention

The findings reveal that user satisfaction fails to exert a statistically significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.289$, $t = 1.772$, $p = 0.077$). Although the coefficient value is relatively high, the effect is not statistically supported. This suggests that, within the fashion e-commerce setting, Generation Z users may not rely solely on their overall satisfaction when forming purchase intentions. Instead, their decisions are more likely influenced by specific usability features, such as navigation and interface design, which have been shown to have significant direct effects.

Compared with previous studies that found user satisfaction to be an important predictor of purchase intention, the present finding offers a different perspective. In several e-commerce studies, satisfaction functions as a central mechanism that links website quality to behavioral intention. However, in this study, satisfaction does not significantly predict purchase intention, indicating that Generation Z users may respond more directly to concrete website features than to general satisfaction. This difference may be explained by the characteristics of fashion e-commerce, where visual appeal, ease of exploration, and interaction convenience can immediately influence users' purchase decisions.

4.4 The Mediating Role of User Satisfaction

The mediation analysis reveals that user satisfaction does not operate as a consistent mediator across all website usability dimensions in their relationship with purchase intention. The indirect effects of Content, Organization, and Readability ($\beta = 0.020$) and Performance and Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.055$) are insignificant, indicating that these two usability dimensions do not influence purchase intention through user satisfaction. This result is consistent with the direct effect analysis, where both dimensions do not significantly affect user satisfaction or purchase intention. Therefore, content quality and system performance appear to be perceived by Generation Z users as basic website requirements rather than factors that shape satisfaction or encourage purchase intention.

The non-significant mediation effect also indicates that enhancing content organization or system performance may not automatically generate stronger purchase intention if these aspects do not create a distinctive user experience. For fashion e-commerce managers, this means that content accuracy, readability, access speed, and system reliability should still be maintained as essential website standards, but they should not be treated as the main strategic levers for increasing purchase intention. Instead, these dimensions function more as hygiene factors: their absence may create dissatisfaction, but their presence alone may not be enough to stimulate purchase-related behavior.

In contrast, Navigation and Links ($\beta = 0.098$) and User Interface Design ($\beta = 0.112$) show statistically significant indirect effects on purchase intention mediated through user satisfaction. The results suggest that ease of navigation and interface design contribute to purchase intention partly by improving users' evaluation of their website experience. However, this mediating role should be interpreted carefully because

the direct effect of user satisfaction on purchase intention does not attain statistical significance ($\beta = 0.289$, $p = 0.077$). Thus, user satisfaction may support the relationship between certain usability dimensions and purchase intention, but it does not serve as the dominant explanatory mechanism. This condition remains methodologically acceptable in contemporary mediation analysis within the PLS-SEM framework. Prior methodological literature suggests that a significant indirect effect may still occur even when the direct relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable is weak or statistically insignificant.

Overall, the findings indicate that Generation Z users' purchase intention in fashion e-commerce is driven more strongly by specific usability features, particularly navigation and interface design, than by overall satisfaction alone. This suggests that practical improvements should focus on creating intuitive navigation structures and visually appealing interfaces, as these aspects have both direct effects on purchase intention and indirect effects through user satisfaction. Therefore, the role of user satisfaction in this study is better understood as a limited or complementary mediator rather than a central mediator. The findings extend previous e-commerce usability research by showing that the influence of usability on purchase intention is more selective than uniform. While earlier studies generally highlight website usability as an important determinant of satisfaction and behavioral intention, this study demonstrates that, among Generation Z users in fashion e-commerce, navigation and interface design are more decisive than content and technical performance. This comparison indicates that usability strategies should be adapted to the characteristics of the target users and the product context rather than applied in a general manner across all e-commerce settings.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that website usability plays an important role in influencing purchase intention among Generation Z users in the context of fashion e-commerce. However, the findings reveal that not all usability dimensions contribute equally. Navigation and links, as well as user interface design, are identified as the most influential factors, as both dimensions have significant direct effects on purchase intention and also contribute positively to user satisfaction. These results highlight the importance of intuitive navigation structures and visually appealing interface design in enhancing user experience and encouraging purchasing behavior.

In contrast, content, organization, and readability, as well as performance and effectiveness, do not show significant effects on either user satisfaction or purchase intention. This indicates that these dimensions are perceived as basic requirements rather than differentiating factors by Generation Z users. As long as the website provides adequate information and functions properly, improvements in these aspects do not necessarily lead to higher satisfaction levels or a more pronounced purchase intention.

Moreover, the study establishes that user satisfaction does not exert a statistically significant direct effect on purchase intention. This suggests that Generation Z users may not rely solely on their overall satisfaction when making purchasing decisions, but instead focus more on specific usability features. The mediation analysis also shows that user satisfaction plays a limited role, as it only partially mediates the effect of navigational quality and interface design on purchase intention, and thus does not constitute a predominant mediating mechanism.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of website usability and digital consumer behavior literature by demonstrating that usability should not always be treated as a single, uniform construct. By applying the WEBUSE framework, this study shows that specific usability dimensions may have different effects on user satisfaction and purchase intention from the Generation Z perspective. The findings also

extend the literature on Generation Z digital consumer behavior by showing that this group's purchase intention in fashion e-commerce is driven more strongly by concrete usability features, especially navigation and interface design, than by overall satisfaction. In addition, the limited mediating role of user satisfaction provides empirical evidence that satisfaction may not always function as the main mechanism linking website usability to purchase intention, particularly in visually driven and experience-oriented digital shopping contexts.

From a practical perspective, e-commerce platforms are encouraged to prioritize improvements to navigation and interface design, as these aspects have the greatest impact on user behavior. Fashion e-commerce managers should focus on developing clear navigation paths, consistent layouts, visually attractive interfaces, and interaction flows that allow users to explore products more comfortably and efficiently.

This study is limited to Generation Z users within the fashion e-commerce context and relies on cross-sectional self-reported data. Future research is recommended to examine other mediating variables that may better explain the relationship between website usability and purchase intention. Potential mediators include trust, perceived value, perceived enjoyment, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, flow experience, and user engagement. These variables may capture different psychological and experiential mechanisms that influence how users convert website experiences into purchase decisions. Future studies may also compare different generational cohorts, product categories, or e-commerce platform types to determine whether the mediating mechanisms found in this study are specific to Generation Z users in fashion e-commerce or can be generalized to broader digital consumer contexts.

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